



BAY AREA REGIONAL PLANNING

American Planning Association Conference
San Francisco, March 21, 2005

Title slide



Bay Area Air Quality Management District

- Attains and maintains air quality standards
- Increases public awareness of positive air quality choices
- Develops and implements protocol and policies for environmental justice

Jean briefly introduces herself and BAAQMD

Paul's Big Question

Taking continuing job and population growth as givens, do we as a region have the cohesion and the institutions to develop and implement broad new solutions for our housing land, use, circulation and environmental quality problems?

Paul Sedway has asked us to talk about regional planning in the Bay Area and to address this central question: (refer to screen) To assist us in dealing with this big question, Paul has asked six subsidiary questions, which together add up to the big one.

Collaboration



We have collaborated on our answers to these questions, and each of us will address a couple of questions on behalf of us all. I'll take question one and six, Henry will answer questions two and three, and Steve will take questions four and five.

Question 1

What is your vision of the challenge ahead of us?

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Challenge: the size and complexity of the Bay Area

- 8,191 square miles
- Over 7 million people
- Large and diverse economy
- 3 central cities
- Spillover to surrounding regions



THE SIZE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE BAY AREA REGION

8,191 square miles (equivalent in area to 175 cities of San Francisco)

Approximately 170 miles in length from north to south

(Estimated driving time from Cloverdale in northern Sonoma County to Gilroy in southern Santa Clara County: 2 hours and 22 minutes on a very good day)

Over 7 million people (larger in population than 40 of the 50 states)

A huge economy (If the Bay Area were a nation, it would have the 24th largest GDP in the world.)

A highly diverse economy, includes:

The wine country of Sonoma and Napa counties

The financial and tourism center of San Francisco

The high-tech well-spring of Silicon Valley (with off-shoots all over the region)

The port and manufacturing uses of Oakland and the East Bay

World renown centers of higher education and research (Berkeley, Stanford, Lawrence Livermore, NASA Ames)

3 central cities (San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland),
over a dozen significant sub-regional centers

A growing commuter shed that spreads into surrounding regions: east to California's Central Valley and south to Santa Cruz

Challenge: A spectacular but difficult geography

- Steep hills and mountains
- Narrow valleys
- Seismic hazards
- The Bay



A SPECTACULAR BUT DIFFICULT GEOGRAPHY

Steep hills and mountains

Narrow valleys

Crisscrossed by active earthquake faults

A huge water-filled hole in the middle of the whole place which requires an expensive system of bridges and tunnels to cross (each one a real or potential bottleneck)

Challenge: Many governments and service providers

- Nine counties
- 101 cities
- Over 1000 special-purpose districts
- Nearly 30 transit providers
- Five regional agencies



A MULTITUDE OF GOVERNMENTS AND PUBLIC-SERVICE PROVIDERS

Nine counties

101 cities

Over 1000 special-purpose districts

Nearly thirty transit providers

Five regional agencies:

The Association of Bay Area Governments (the COG)

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (the MPO)

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (a uniquely Californian construct)

The Bay Conservation and Development Commission (with comprehensive jurisdiction over a 100-foot donut surrounding the Bay)

The Regional Water Quality Control Board

Challenge: shrinking fiscal resources

- Dot-com bust
- State budget and deficit problems
- Proposition 13 legacies
- Federal deficit and cutbacks in domestic programs
- Democrats in a Republican nation

SHRINKING FISCAL RESOURCES

Local economy not yet recovered from the dot-com bust

A state with huge operating budget and debt problems

A severely flawed system for funding local governments (Proposition 13, compounded by a subsequent series of inadequate fixes alternating with new takeaways)

A huge federal deficit and cutbacks in domestic programs

A staunchly Democratic stronghold in a largely Republican nation

Challenge: pressing and long-term regional problems

- Housing affordability
- Lengthening commutes
- Economic divide
- Threatened environmental assets
- Non-fit epidemic

PRESSING AND LONG-TERM REGIONAL PROBLEMS

Housing affordability

Median single-family house price in the Bay Area: \$560,000

Over \$700,000 in San Francisco. San Mateo and Marin Counties

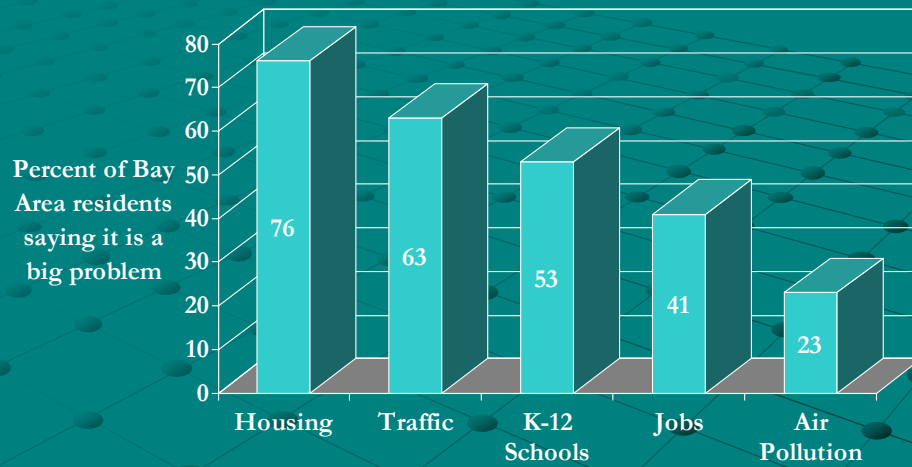
Less than 15 percent of Bay Area households have incomes sufficient to qualify for the mortgages typically required by these prices

Potential for lengthening commutes

Contrary to common perception, neither average commute distances nor times have grown substantially since the early nineties (They currently are about 16 miles and 30 minutes), though there was a bump in average commute time to about 35 minutes during the height of the dot-com boom

However, the distribution around those averages is a big concern, as really long commute times (sometimes exceeding an hour-and-a-half) are endured by those who have moved to the farthest edges of the region and beyond in search of affordable housing and good schools

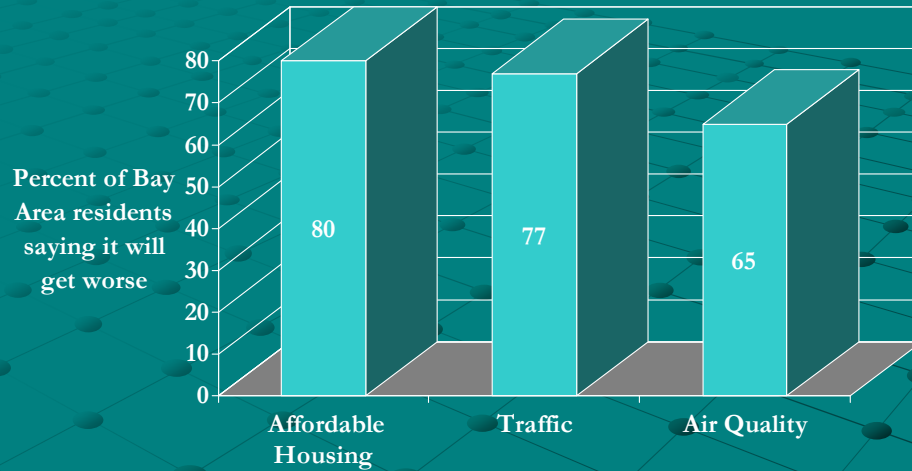
Big regional problems



PPIC Statewide Survey, August 2004

When Bay Area residents are polled housing and transportation top their list of regional concerns

Worry about the future



PPIC Statewide Survey, August 2004

And their worries about the future.

Challenge: pressing and long-term regional problems

- Housing affordability
- Lengthening commutes
- Economic divide
- Threatened environmental assets
- Non-fit epidemic

PRESSING AND LONG-TERM REGIONAL PROBLEMS

The economic divide

The gap between rich and poor communities may be widening

And is most pronounced in our schools, which are becoming more segregated and exhibiting higher concentrations of childhood poverty (The difficulty of providing for adequate K-12 education in schools with concentrated poverty and social problems is exacerbated by the State fiscal situation)

Threatened environmental assets

Aggressive multi-dimensional program has brought ground-level ozone levels to attainment

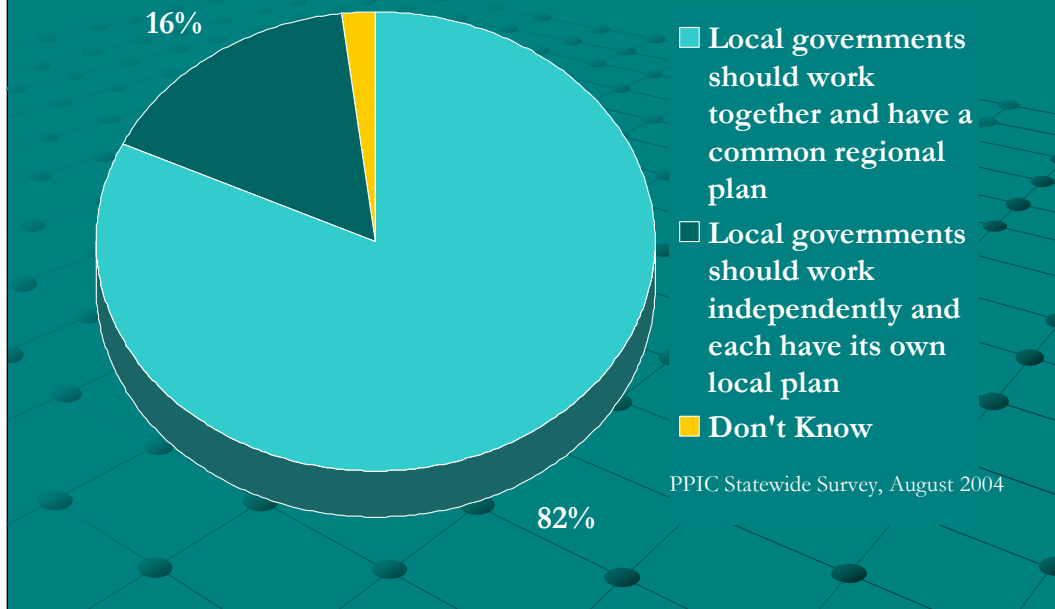
But particulate matter remains an issue, as does our contribution to global climate change

And we continue to consume open space at unnecessarily high rates

An environmental health epidemic

Growing evidence that forms of regional development that require automobile use and discourage walking are contributing to both childhood and adult obesity and increasing rates of diabetes and other related diseases (fast food and the under-funding of school P-E do not help either)

Challenge: a shared desire to excel



A SHARED DESIRE TO EXCEL

The people of the Bay Area believe they live in a very special place and that—in spite of the problems—they continue to enjoy an extraordinary quality of life: economically, culturally and environmentally.

They are keenly interested in maintaining and improving that quality of life. And they want regional planning.



Association of Bay Area Governments

- The COG
- Planning & research
- Financing
- Risk management
- Training
- Other services to members

Henry introduces himself and ABAG

Question 2

How effective do you think the current organizational arrangements in the Bay Area are in meeting the challenge, and in anticipating and responding to existing and emerging regional problems? How are the agencies that each of you lead contributing?

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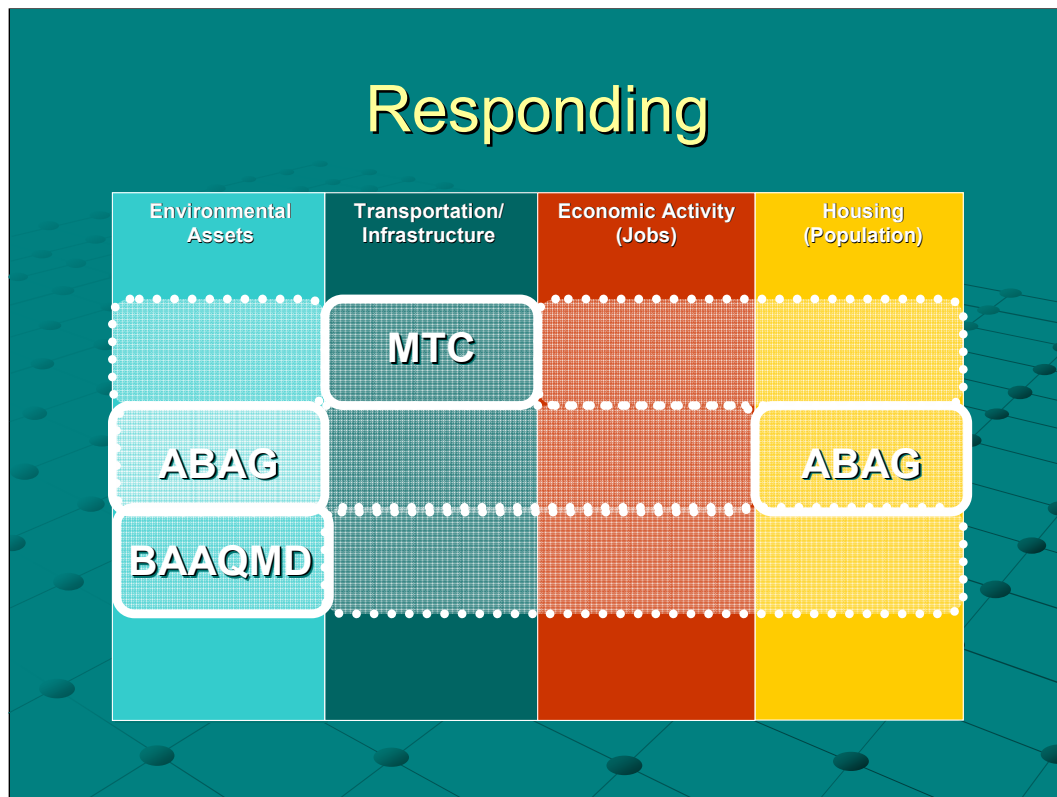
Anticipation

- ABAG econometric and demographic forecasts
- MTC transportation modeling
- BAAQMD air quality monitoring and forecasting

We are reminded of the organizationally-challenged file clerk who commented “Oh, filing is easy; it’s retrieval that’s the hard part.”

Similarly, we have no difficulty in anticipating problems. We’ve been doing that well for over three decades.

- ABAG is widely respected for the quality of its econometric and demographic forecasts.
- MTC has a solid program for modeling the transportation system and the impacts of potential changes in land use and in system capacity
- BAAQMD has a variety of sophisticated tools for monitoring and forecasting air quality.



We also have a record of responding well in areas where we have the appropriate tools, resources and authority:

[CLICK]

MTC is widely respected among MPOs and among the transportation agencies in this region for the leading edge techniques and the creativity it has applied in planning and financing transportation improvements.

It has also become a major player in transportation operations:

- electronically collecting and managing tolls through Fastrak and the Bay Area Toll Authority,
- providing emergency road services, rideshare programs and a 511 traveler information system,
- pioneering the use of smart cards as a way for fare collection spanning multiple transit systems.

[CLICK]

ABAG has successfully led a very difficult and politically contentious process to allocate state housing needs among 110 local jurisdictions.

It has spearheaded regional efforts to mitigate earthquake hazards and manage the Bay estuary, and It has managed the development of a trail system intended to encircle the entire Bay.

[CLICK]

BAAQMD, created in 1955, was the first regional agency in California to deal with air pollution.

In spite of continued growth of the region, there have been progressive improvements in air quality.

While there are still many areas of concern, our air is considerably healthier than it was a decade ago, and we experience many fewer unhealthy air days.

[CLICK]

We have been less successful in putting it all together

Improvements required

- Multi-dimensional conceptualization
- Integrated packaging
- Common vision
- Connections
- Multi-generational vision

We have been less successful in putting it all together:

- Conceptualizing our problems as multi-dimensional ones, requiring multi-dimensional solutions;
- Packaging opportunities in integrated ways;
- Effectively deciding together what we want to be when we grow up and directing our resources toward this common vision;
- Simply making the CONNECTIONS.

This is not an issue of coordination—we have a long history of coordination; of working together...but mostly on segmented projects. It may be an issue of a shared, integrated vision: of broad conceptualization and imagination of what could be; of forward-focused, big-picture, multi-generational aspirations for the whole of this very special place and of understanding fully how various segments connect to one another.

Question 3

How significant is the coordination among and between your agencies? Do you believe that the Joint Policy Committee has significant potential for leadership in this regard? If not, what should be done?

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Early History

- Environmental Management Plan
- Air quality plans
- Comprehensive Regional Plan
- Regional Review

The three agencies have a long history of coordination and cooperation.

In the mid seventies, ABAG led the region's preparation of an Environmental Management Plan, including preparation of an air quality element. This major planning effort involved all three agencies, and all three have cooperated on the preparation of air plans ever since.

During this same period, all three agencies worked together on a comprehensive regional plan and cooperated on the review of regionally significant projects to ensure consistency with that plan.

Later History

- Reduced funding and mandates
- Transportation emphasis
- Grant-driven, opportunistic planning

However, by the late seventies and early eighties federal and state funding and mandates for regional planning began to disappear, and local governments were able to contribute less to regional activities because of Proposition 13.

Integrative regional planning declined as an activity in all agencies and efforts were concentrated in those areas for which there was money.

As in nearly all regions across the country, this meant mostly regional transportation planning. In the Bay Area this put MTC at the center of the picture.

ABAG supported MTC's work with population and employment projections and also did housing planning to the extent that it was supported by State funding.

ABAG also undertook specific environmental planning projects funded mostly by categorical grants from the federal government.

All three agencies continued to work together on air quality planning.

It is important to observe that the absence of integrative planning may be more a function of real and perceived resources than one of multiple regional agencies. Until recently most consolidated COGs and MPOs across the country have also concentrated principally on transportation planning, because that is where the resources were.

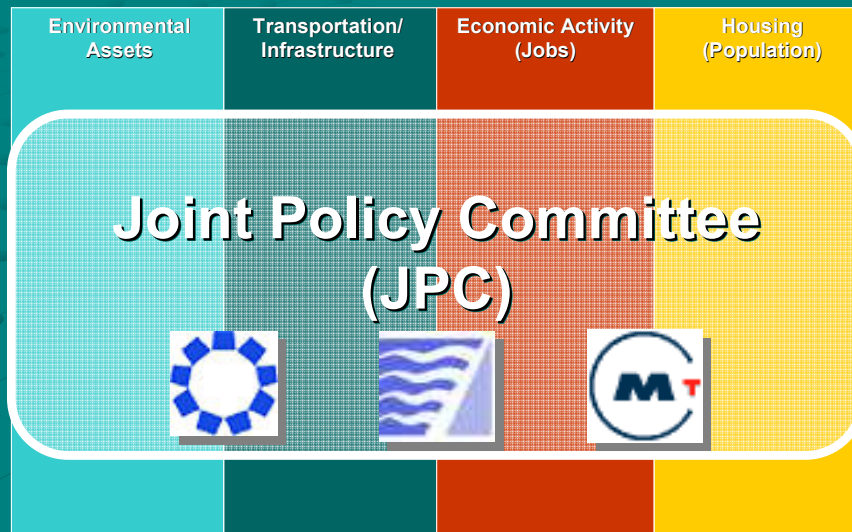
Seeking an integrated strategy

The Smart Growth Vision



In spite of continuing resource restrictions and in spite of our organizational separation, all five regional agencies recently joined together with a consortium of private and voluntary sector groups to produce the rudiments of an integrated land-use, transportation and environmental strategy: This is the *Smart Growth Strategy / Regional Liability Footprint Project*, completed in late 2002 with the participation of thousands of people from across the Bay Area.

Integrated Implementation



[CLICK]

Now we three agencies have joined together through a Joint Policy Committee to implement that strategy.

The Joint Policy Committee (JPC) meets monthly and provides a central focus for implementing and refining the strategy and for coordinating a diverse set of regional planning activities consistent with the strategy.

The JPC is currently concentrating on Transit Oriented Development.

Over time it will address other aspects of the strategy as well, and it has a statutory mandate to oversee and coordinate the major planning products of all three agencies.

The Joint Policy Committee

| Representing ABAG | Representing BAAQMD | Representing MTC |
|--|--|--|
| Jane Brunner, Council City of Oakland | Chris Daly, Supervisor San Francisco | Bill Dodd, Supervisor Napa County |
| Dave Cortese, Council City of San Jose | Mark DeSaulnier, Supervisor Contra Costa County | Steve Kinsey, Supervisor Marin County |
| Mark Green, Mayor Union City | Erin Garner, Mayor City of Monte Sereno | Sue Lempert, Council City of San Mateo |
| Scott Haggerty, Supervisor Alameda County | Patrick Kwok, Vice Mayor City of Cupertino | John McLemore City of Santa Clara |
| Rose Gibson, Supervisor San Mateo County | Pamela Torliatt, Council City of Petaluma | Jon Rubin San Francisco |
| Steve Rabinowitsh, Council City of Santa Rosa | Marland Townsend, Council Foster City | Jim Spering, Mayor Suisun City |
| Gwen Regalia, Council City of Walnut Creek | Gayle Uilkema, Supervisor Contra Costa County | Shelia Young, Mayor City of San Leandro |

The JPC has meeting since August, and it may be too early to confidently evaluate its potential, but so far we have been impressed by:

- The Committee's interest in and appreciation of big picture issues;
- It's ability to understand and make the connections;
- It's comprehension of and commitment to quality regional development;
- The absence of interagency conflict and parochialism (If you had no background, you could not tell who represents what agency)

The JPC clearly gets it, and they are encouraging us all to get with the program.



The Metropolitan Transportation Committee

- The MPO
- Transportation planning, financing and coordination
- Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA)
- 511
- Translink

Steve introduces himself and MTC

Question 4

What kind of future planning functions do you believe should be undertaken at the regional level? Are we ready to think about a comprehensive regional plan which can provide a common basis for each regional agency's actions and may even be locally implementable by incentives rather than sanctions? What sort of support is required from state government? What sort of cooperation is required from the local level, and how can it be secured?

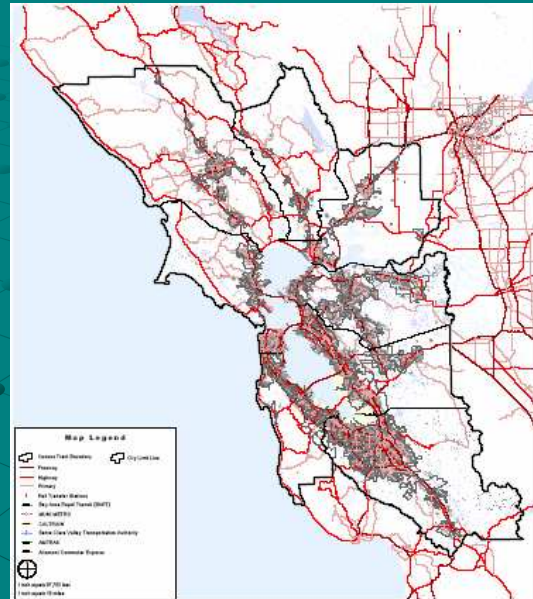
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As Henry noted, we have the rudiments of a comprehensive regional strategy in place as the result of the Smart Growth Strategy / Regional Livability Footprint Project.

The Smart Growth Vision

- A Network of Neighborhoods
- Concentrating growth near the Bay, in existing communities, and at transit nodes



This is a shared regional vision that concentrates new growth in a “Network of Neighborhoods,” clustered closely around the Bay, in existing communities, and near transit nodes.

The Smart Growth Vision

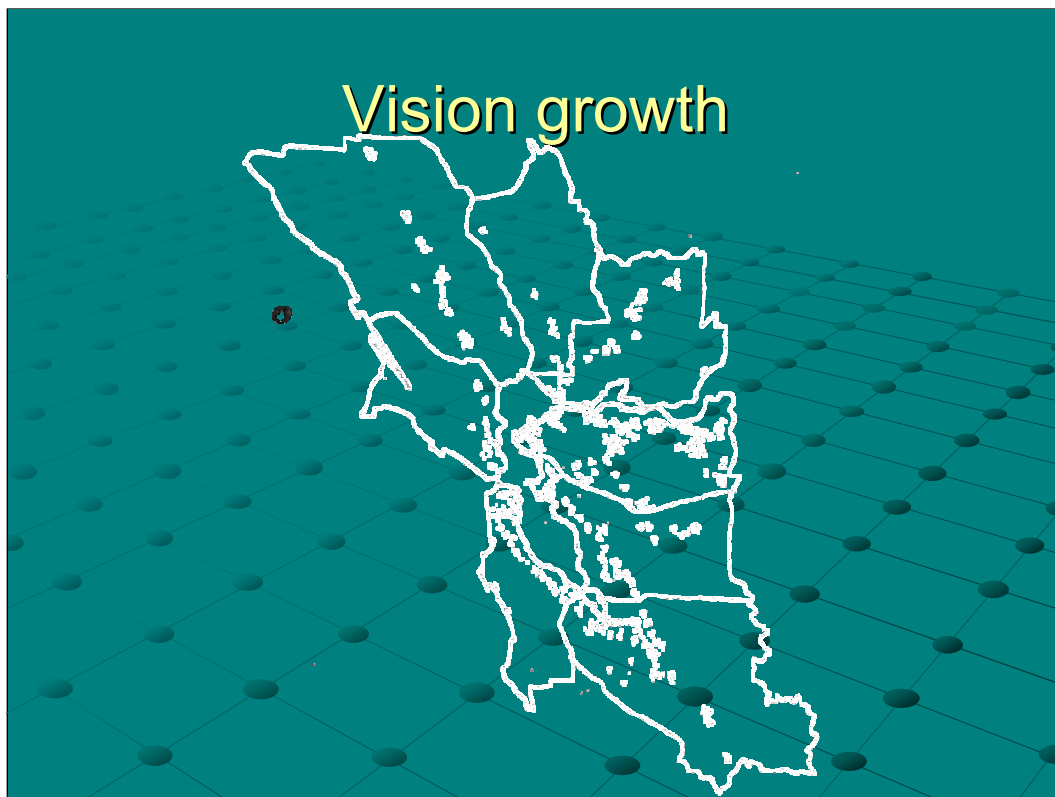
- Reduces the need to travel long distances
- Facilitates transit and other non-automotive travel
- Increases the availability of affordable housing
- Uses land efficiently
- Helps protect natural assets
- Promotes social equity
- Employs existing infrastructure capacity
- Maintains and reinforces existing communities

What we refer to as the Smart-Growth Vision is intended to achieve eight complementary regional objectives:

- To reduce the need to travel long distances
- To facilitate transit and other non-automotive travel
- To increase the availability of affordable housing
- To use land efficiently
- To help protect natural assets
- To promote social equity
- To employ existing infrastructure capacity
- To maintain and reinforce existing communities



The development footprint resulting from the Smart-Growth Vision is much more compact than that which would result from trend growth.



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Trend and vision compared



The State legislation codifying the JPC requires that it coordinate the major planning documents of all three agencies. The principle basis for that coordination is the Smart Growth Vision.

Like all good strategies, however, it will require review over time and some refinement to reflect nuances that were not fully considered in the original formulation.

For example, we believe that we may have to pay a bit more attention to commercial, industrial and distribution uses and to the protection of specific environmental assets.

But we do not see the integrative strategy growing into a BIG FAT comprehensive plan.

Effective Strategy

- Simple
- Visualizable
- Bold
- Enduring
- Shared

We want to maintain an effective strategy, and we believe that requires that it be:

Simple, focusing on no more than a half-dozen or so key concepts and ideas

Visualizable, telling a compelling story or painting a memorable picture

Bold, confronting the trend or business-as-normal in a less-than-subtle way

Enduring, with key concepts robust enough to continue to guide over the lengthy periods required to make a regional difference and

Shared, grounded in a genuine consensus among key regional players

Implementation

- Strategic public investment
- Partnership with local, state and federal governments
- Collaboration with private and voluntary sectors
- Provision of incentives
- Communication and sharing of big ideas

The strategy will be implemented at the local level largely through voluntary cooperation and a limited program of incentives.

We have no effective sanctions, nor have we requested any.

The key to much of the strategy is getting select localities to accept and implement more compact development.

Sanctions can prevent things from happening.

They will not motivate the kind of positive actions we are seeking.

We believe the locals will cooperate largely because they see the intrinsic benefits of smart growth to their residents and jurisdictions

But some incentives can help kick start that perception and get things moving.

State Help

- Provide Incentives
 - TIF for TOD
 - Loans for specific plans
 - Infrastructure priorities
- Remove Disincentives
 - Perverse system of local government finance
 - CEQA for NIMBYs
 - Construction defect litigation

We will accept any help we can get from the State in providing those incentives, for example:

- TIF for TOD
- A loan program to finance the preparation of specific plans
- Smart-growth priorities for state infrastructure investments

As important is the State's action on some unintended disincentives that discourage smart growth:

- A perverse post-proposition-13 system for funding local government that causes localities to favor retail uses over new residences
- The ironic use of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reviews as a tool for NIMBYs
- A permissive environment for construction-defect litigation that scares off potential condominium developers.

Question 5

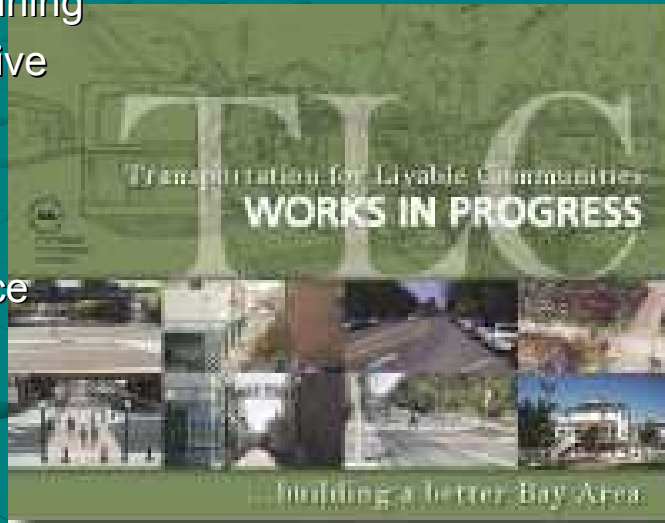
What results do you envision coming out of recent transit-related programs and Resolution 3434 (TLC, HIP, TOD study, etc.)? How can they be implemented at the regional and local levels?

Question 5: What results do you envision coming out of recent transit related programs and Resolution 3434 (TLC, HIP, TOD study, etc)? How can they be implemented at the regional and local levels?

This question refers to some modest incentive programs we have put in place or are proposing to implement at MTC to encourage smart-type development.

Transportation for Livable Communities

- Inclusive planning
- Non-automotive connectivity
- TOD
- Infill
- Sense of place
- Quality of life



TLC stands for Transportation for Livable Communities.

TLC provides grants to local communities and supports community-based transportation projects that:

- Are developed through a collaborative and inclusive planning process
- Improve connectivity among non-automotive modes;
- Support well-designed, high-density housing and mixed use development that is well-served by transit, or will help build the capacity for future transit investment and use;
- Support a community's infill or transit-oriented development and neighborhood revitalization activities;
- Enhance a community's sense of place and quality of life

HIP, the Housing Incentive Program, is a subset of TLC that uses transportation funding to reward communities that promote high-density and affordable housing, as well as mixed uses, in association with transit

Both TLC and HIP are very popular, and we get many more applications than we can fund. They have assisted localities across the region in achieving quality projects that integrate transportation with development and produce more livable environments.

Transit-oriented Development Policy

1. Corridor Performance Measures

Need quantitative measure that's flexible

2. Corridor Working Groups

Process that brings together interests

3. Station Area Plans

Planning for land use and access



With the JPC, we are in process of developing a Transit-oriented Development (TOD) policy.

The proposed policy would condition new transit investments (so-called Resolution 3434 projects) on supportive development: in effect planned densities commensurate to the proposed transit technology.

We are proposing to implement the proposed policy on a corridor basis, allowing some trade-off among stations and localities in specific densities, and we are proposing to support station area planning with planning grants.

We expect the result to provide required ridership for the region's transit investment and to support the region's smart growth objectives.

Question 5

What other changes do you recommend to enhance collaboration and coordination?

Jean:

We've just begun a new, mostly informal, system of collaboration and coordination, and we are learning and improving on the fly. It's too soon to recommend changes

Clearly, if we had been around fifty years ago to establish a system of regional planning and had the benefit of fifty years of foresight; we would not have created the system we have. We would not have created nine counties and 101 cities. We would not have over 1000 special purpose districts and we would not have five separate regional agencies. But that's what we have, and for lots of reasons (both good and bad), it's not going to change real soon.

We have chosen to work with what we have, rather than beat our heads against the wall trying to change it. We think it is much more productive to move forward and concentrate on the substantive issues facing this region than to fixate on organizational and institutional structures that are difficult to change and even if changed may be no more effective in producing the intended result than what we have in place.

The members of the JPC, who are also members of our respective Boards and Commission are adapting rapidly and leading the way. They genuinely believe this stuff is important and worth doing.

Pre-existing work programs and organizational cultures make the adaptation of our bureaucracies a bit more difficult, and it will take a bit more time. But we are working on it.

As we develop a deeper partnership among ourselves, we will also need to reach out and establish a closer working relationship with our constituent local governments. Ultimately most of the positive change will occur through local actions, and the local connection around the regional strategy needs to be made stronger.

With appropriate partnerships in place and organized around a strong common purpose, we believe we can make the real progress which the Bay Area, this very special place, deserves.

Expectations: taking the long view

- In any one year, 99% of the region is already in place
- Over 30 years, we can influence new growth equal to 1/5 of the region...
- But only if...
 - we know what we want to do,
 - have the will to do it,
 - are persistent, and
 - have the right tools.

One of the most important things to do is manage expectations.

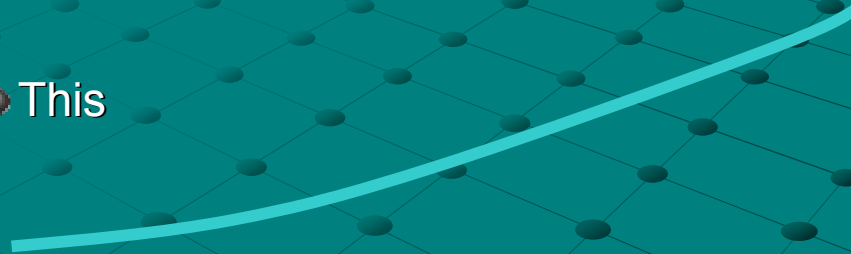
A perceptible difference will not happen overnight. And it will require knowledge, will, persistence, and the right tools to achieve.

Steady, measured progress

● Not this



● This



The region has a history of fits and starts in regional planning. Every time we hit a wall, we seem to start over again, losing momentum. That's not acceptable. This is a long-term process, based on three key ideas

Three key ideas

1. Collaboration
...involving our partners
2. Focus
...on consistent objectives
3. Commitment
...over the long term

The regional agencies cannot do it individually or alone. It's going to take much more than the three of us.

We need to focus on a clear set of common and robust objectives

And we have to maintain commitment to these common objectives over the long term.

A special place...now and in the future

